

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 5, 8, 10, 11, 14 and 15, add claims 21-27, and cancel claims 4 and 7 in accordance with the following listing showing the status of all claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for use in an aquarium, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a rail;
- (b) attachment means for attaching the rail to an aquarium so that the rail runs along an inside surface of a wall of the aquarium; and
- (c) a dock element that is buoyant and that has sliding means for attaching to the rail and for allowing the dock element to freely slide along the rail as a water level in the aquarium varies.

wherein the dock element includes a main portion and a ramp portion, each having a top surface and a bottom surface, and

wherein both the top and bottom surfaces of the ramp portion extend at a downward angle relative to the top and bottom surfaces of the main portion.

2. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the attachment means comprises at least one suction cup.

3. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the attachment means is capable of attaching the rail to an underwater point on the inside surface of the wall of the aquarium.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~according to claim 4,~~ for use in an aquarium, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a first rail and a second rail;
- (b) attachment means for attaching the first rail and the second rail to an aquarium so that the first and second rails run along an inside surface of a wall of the aquarium; and
- (c) a dock element that is buoyant and that has sliding means for attaching to the first and second rails and for allowing the dock element to freely slide along the first and second rails as a water level in the aquarium varies,

wherein the second rail is attached to the first rail.

6. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the sliding means comprises at least one hole through the dock element for accommodating the rail.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~according to claim 7,~~ for use in an aquarium, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a rail;
 - (b) attachment means for attaching the rail to an aquarium so that the rail runs along an inside surface of a wall of the aquarium; and
 - (c) a dock element that is buoyant and that has sliding means for attaching to the rail and for allowing the dock element to freely slide along the rail,
- wherein the dock element comprises a platform that is approximately planar and a ramp that is oriented at a downward angle to the platform, and

wherein the ramp has an overall density that is greater than the overall density of the platform and that is greater than the density of water.

9. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of a top surface of the dock element is contoured.

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~according to claim 1,~~ for use in an aquarium, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a rail;
- (b) attachment means for attaching the rail to an aquarium so that the rail runs along an inside surface of a wall of the aquarium; and
- (c) a dock element that is buoyant and that has sliding means for attaching to the rail and for allowing the dock element to freely slide along the rail as a water level in the aquarium varies.

wherein the attachment means comprises a hook configured to hook to a top edge of the aquarium.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for use in an aquarium, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a rail;
- (b) support means for supporting the rail so that the rail extends into the aquarium from a location outside of the aquarium; and
- (c) a dock element that is buoyant and that has sliding means for attaching to the rail and for allowing the dock element to freely slide along the rail as a water level in the aquarium varies.

12. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising a second rail, wherein the support means also is for supporting the second rail so that the second rail extends into the aquarium, and wherein the sliding means also is for permitting the dock element to slide along the second rail, as well as the rail.

13. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the second rail is attached to and runs in parallel with the rail.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the dock element ~~comprises a platform that is approximately planar and a ramp that is oriented at a downward angle to the platform~~ includes a main portion and a ramp

portion, each having a top surface and a bottom surface, and wherein both the top and bottom surfaces of the ramp portion extend at a downward angle relative to the top and bottom surfaces of the main portion.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus ~~according to claim 14,~~ for use in an aquarium, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a rail;
- (b) support means for supporting the rail so that the rail extends into the aquarium; and
- (c) a dock element that is buoyant and that has sliding means for attaching to the rail and for allowing the dock element to freely slide along the rail,
wherein the dock element comprises a platform that is approximately planar and a ramp that is oriented at a downward angle to the platform, and

wherein the ramp has an overall density that is greater than the overall density of the platform and that is greater than the density of water.

16. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the rail runs in a substantially vertical orientation when supported by the support means.

17. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the support means comprises at least one suction cup.

18. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the sliding means comprises at least one hole through the dock element for accommodating the rail.

19. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein at least a portion of a top surface of the dock element is contoured.

20. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the support means comprises a hook configured to hook to a top edge of the aquarium.

21. (New) An apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the second rail runs in parallel with the first rail.

22. (New) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a selected portion of the dock element is weighted relative to the remainder of the dock element.

23. (New) An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the selected portion of the dock element is weighted by an embedded weight having a higher mass density than the remainder of the dock element.

24. (New) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein a selected portion of the dock element is weighted relative to the remainder of the dock element.

25. (New) An apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the selected portion of the dock element is weighted by an embedded weight having a higher mass density than the remainder of the dock element.

26. (New) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the dock element is comprised of a polyresin.

27. (New) An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the dock element is comprised of a polyresin.